

The following plan includes simple but critical steps to ensure your safety. Just print it out, and complete each section to the best of your abilities. If you wish to save this PDF file, we recommend doing so on a computer not accessible by your abuser.

Remember to review this document often.  
And keep it in a place only you know.

---

Name

---

Date

---

Review dates

## STEP 1 SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT.

Victims of domestic abuse cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered persons may employ some or all of the following strategies:

- If I decide to leave, I will \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Practice how to get out safely: Determine what doors, windows, elevator, stairwells or fire escapes would you use.)
- I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) \_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.
- I can tell (name of person) \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- If I have to leave my home, I will go \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (Decide on a place you'll go even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
- If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.



## STEP 2 SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE.

Battered persons frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done strategically in order to increase safety. That's because batterers often get violent when they believe that their partner is trying to leave the relationship.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with (names of people) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- I will keep copies of important documents or keys at (name of person/place) \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will open a savings account by (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to increase my independence. I will have statements of the account go to (address/person's house/email address) \_\_\_\_\_.

Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

- The domestic violence program's hotline number is \_\_\_\_\_. I can seek shelter and information by calling this hotline.
- I can leave extra clothes with (name of person) \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can keep spare change on me at all times to make calls from a payphone. I understand that if I use my cell phone, the next month's bill may tell my batterer the numbers I called after leaving him/her. To keep my phone communications confidential, I must either use payphones or get a friend to permit me to use his/her cell phone for a limited time when I first leave.
- I will check with (names of people) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see if they'd be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- I will sit down and review my safety plan every (frequency of time) \_\_\_\_\_ in order to plan the safest way to leave. (Domestic Violence Center advocate or friend) \_\_\_\_\_ has agreed to help me review this plan.
- I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.



### STEP 3 SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE.

There are many things that former victims of abuse can do to increase their safety at their new home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- I can equip my residence with a security system, additional locks, window bars, sturdy poles to go in the tracks of sliding doors, etc.
- I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- I can install an outside sensor-operated lighting system that lights up when a person is approaching my house.
- I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to \_\_\_\_\_ (friend/minister/other) in the event that my partner abducts the children.
- I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick them up and that my abuser is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
  - School \_\_\_\_\_;
  - Day care staff \_\_\_\_\_;
  - Babysitter \_\_\_\_\_;
  - Sunday school teacher \_\_\_\_\_;
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can inform (neighbor) \_\_\_\_\_,  
(pastor/trusted confidant) \_\_\_\_\_  
and (friend) \_\_\_\_\_ that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.



## STEP 4 SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER.

Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate the law. Victims of domestic abuse should recognize that they may need to ask the police and the courts to uphold their protection order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

- I will keep my protection order (location) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in).
- I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- I can call the Domestic Violence Center if I am not sure about "B" above or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- I will inform my employer, my pastor/trusted confidant, my closest friend, and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a protection order.
- If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the Clerk of Courts located at \_\_\_\_\_.
- If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- Should the police not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and file a complaint with the chief of the police department.
- I can also file a criminal complaint with the prosecutor in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred. I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that he commits in violation of the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.



## STEP 5 SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC.

Battered persons must decide if and when they will tell others that their partner is abusive and that their well-being is at risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help protect victims of domestic violence. So it's important to consider carefully which and how many people to inform.

I might do any or all of the following to ensure my safety at work and in public:

- I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- I can ask (colleague) \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- When driving home, if problems occur I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I use public transit, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with my battering partner.
- I can also \_\_\_\_\_.



## STEP 6 SAFETY AND DRUGS OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

Most people in this culture consume alcohol. Many also consume mood-altering drugs. However, it's important to understand that the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a person's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect himself/herself from an abusive partner. In addition, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the batterer may give him/her an excuse to use violence. So in the context of drug or alcohol use, a victim of domestic abuse needs to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with the battering partner, I can enhance my safety by doing some or all of the following:

- If I am going to drink or use drugs, I can do so in a safe place with people who understand my risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
  
- I can also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- If my partner is using a substance, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- I might also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- To safeguard my children, I might \_\_\_\_\_  
and/or \_\_\_\_\_



## STEP 7 SAFETY AND MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH.

The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by a partner is typically physically exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for oneself takes incredible courage, energy and determination.

In an effort to conserve my emotional energy and resources to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some or all of the following:

- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can try to say, "I can" often to myself and be assertive with others.
- I can tell myself \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- I can read \_\_\_\_\_  
to help me feel stronger.
- I can call \_\_\_\_\_ and/or  
\_\_\_\_\_ as personal resources to support me.
- Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- I can attend workshops and support groups at the Domestic Violence Center or  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or  
\_\_\_\_\_ to gain confidence and  
strengthen my relationships with other people.



## STEP 8 ITEMS TO TAKE WHEN LEAVING.

When battered persons leave their partners, it is important they depart with certain items. And in case they have to leave abruptly, sometimes victims of abuse plan ahead by giving an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend.

These items might best be placed in one location so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

When I leave, I should take:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license and registration                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank books                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's birth certificates  | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication  | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance papers                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My birth certificate           | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare identification                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Small sellable objects                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social security cards          | <input type="checkbox"/> Work permits  | <input type="checkbox"/> Address book                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School and vaccination records | <input type="checkbox"/> Green card  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal computer or laptop    | <input type="checkbox"/> Passport  | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce papers  | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favorite toys and/or blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checkbook, ATM card            | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records for all family members                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Items of special sentimental value       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit cards                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keys — house/car/office        |  |   |

Telephone numbers I need to know:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Police department (home)

\_\_\_\_\_  
County registry of protection orders

\_\_\_\_\_  
Police department (work)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Work number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Police department (school)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's home number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Domestic Violence Center hotline

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Minister

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other

